



## **PENRYN TOWN COUNCIL**

**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**15 APRIL 2013**

### **Community Report**

**Author: Michelle Davey, Town Clerk**

I am very pleased to present my third community report, partly because it is a great opportunity to share with the residents of Penryn what their Council has been doing over the past civic year, but mainly because it means that I am still here! Unfortunately, the same is not true of all of my colleagues and we were disappointed this year to lose one of our Customer Support Officers, Hesta. However, following a recruitment process during March this year, we are very fortunate to have found a very capable replacement in Lauren. With Amie taking maternity leave again this year, we also have another addition to the fold in Sue. Both new members of staff are currently undergoing training and are progressing very quickly.

There have also been changes this year to Council members. New members, Councillors Garwood and Hodge, were elected last May, followed by the co-option of Councillor Smith in July. All three members have been busy engaging with the Council and the community and getting to grips with the sometimes slow, but necessary, procedures of local councils.

Following on from last year's refurbishment of the Temperance Hall, the Stuart Stephen Memorial Hall received a facelift this year and, with a new kitchen and toilets and central heating, reopened its doors at a special opening ceremony on 1 March. Along with the new look of the buildings, the Council and the Stuart Stephen Memorial Hall Trust have updated the hire charges on the hall to new hourly rates which it is hoped will increase the revenue from the halls whilst keeping the cost low to our local community groups and residents.

The most controversial issue this year appeared to be the car parks. The new terms and conditions in Permarin car park caused some ripples initially and seem to now be working smoothly, but a proposal from the Penryn Traders Group to swap the lease on Permarin car park for a similar lease on Commercial Road car park caused an outcry from local residents against the proposal. A public meeting was held prior to the Council taking its decision and the proposal was rejected and normal service was resumed.

Last year, the Town Council took over the running of the public conveniences and I am pleased to report that, so far, all of the indications are that this new arrangement is working well. However, I add a note of caution as it is very likely that the funding contributions from both Cornwall Council and the Harbours Board will cease next year and the Town Council will be faced with another tough decision.

The Section 106 Steering Group completed its work on the unspent developer contributions last year, seeing many new traffic schemes come to fruition, and the use of open spaces funds to

commission a report on the drainage problems at Glasney Field. However, the Group will continue to monitor new contributions and to ensure that actions agreed with Cornwall Council officers are carried through to fruition.

Last year was a great year for events in Penryn. In addition to the popular annual Fair Day and Penryn Week, there was the very successful Penryn Arts Festival which drew people into Penryn, some from very far afield; the Gorsedh, which despite all the indications in the morning was finally held on College Field in glorious sunshine; and the Green Fields Festival which saw hundreds of people, residents and students alike, passing through the gates of College Field for a day of music, Pimms and fun for all the family.

Local community groups continue to thrive in Penryn with the Olive Branch teaming up with Incredible Edible on a number of gardening related initiatives and the Glasney Green Space Regeneration Group holding events on and around Glasney Field, including daffodil bulb planting, litter picking, and this year, for the first time, the annual May Day celebrations, will see children from Penryn dancing from College Field to Doorstep Green before arriving at the maypole. The Friday Market has also spread its wings with a monthly Saturday market, with the cooperation of the Saturday bingo. Meanwhile the Penryn Old People's Club, the Federation, the WI continue to cater for the older generation.

In recognition of the work of local residents in the community, the Town Council bestows the prestigious Saracen Awards and this year was another first as the Town Council unusually awarded a joint award to the founders of the Penryn Rugby Club, Anthony Retallack, and Mike and Peter Young. Another worthy recipient was Patricia Ashe of Penryn's Huffa Puffas. The town Council also awarded another £10k in grants to voluntary organisations and charities providing vital services to people in Penryn.

The Town Council continues with its efforts to engage better with the community and currently has 216 followers on Facebook and a further 328 on Twitter. The Town Council has also reinstated its Councillor surgeries, and although the first surgery in March was not attended, we persevere and the next one is due to be held on the evening of Monday 23 June. There will soon also be a new community noticeboard installed outside the Town Council offices. In the coming year, I will be working with Lauren to produce a new online monthly newsletter, hard copies of which will be available in the office and on request.

Penryn Town Council continues its partnership working with Cornwall Council and is currently investigating a number of possibilities for taking local control over the town's assets. The Town Council, along with Falmouth and Truro, is also working with Cornwall Council to set up a new, more efficient and cost-effective CCTV system which it is hoped will be up and running by this time next year.

The past year has also been one of consolidation for the Town Council with the appointment of a new internal auditor and a programme of adoption of new procedures and policies creating more clarity, equality and transparency. This has created a lot of work and I am eternally grateful to the support provided by the Cornwall Association of Local Councils and to my fellow Town Clerks and to Falmouth's Finance Officer who has been extremely supportive. In conjunction with the new policy framework and audit regime, the Town Council is also implementing a new accounts package tailored to the needs of Town and Parish Councils. Our Finance Officer, Helen Perry, has embraced this change with enthusiasm and I have no doubt it will improve our overall control of Town Council finances.

The caretaking staff have also had a very busy year and I would like to thank John Thompson for his work on the Stuart Stephen Memorial Hall in helping to get it back into use following the refurbishment and to Shirley for coping so well with a collapsed ceiling in the Temperance Hall and a leaky clock tower as well as assisting the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Gill Grant, with achieving accreditation for the museum. Judging by the files sitting on Shirley's desk, I can assure you it was no mean feat.

In the coming year, the Town Council will begin work on a new Community Emergency Plan, continue the refurbishment programme with the Council Chamber, produce a new Town Guide for 2015, launch a Clean Up Penryn campaign, continue to pursue options for the provision of allotments, and seek to finally address the damp problems in the clock tower.

Finally, as always, I would like to thank the Mayor, Councillor Beverly Hulme, and the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Gill Grant, for their support over the past year, especially the two whole days spent interviewing candidates for the two Customer Support Officer posts. I also thank my staff of course for their hard work and commitment and other members of the Town Council who have given their support in various ways throughout the year.